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PART II.—APRIL

Al-Risālat Al-Laduniyya. By Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad Al-Ghazālī (450/1059–505/1111)

TRANSLATED BY MARGARET SMITH, M.A., D.LITT.

[My grateful thanks are due to Professor Margoliouth, who kindly read through this translation and suggested a number of emendations, which I was glad to adopt. I owe thanks also to Professor R. A. Nicholson for helpful suggestions made at an earlier stage of the work.]

CHAP.

INTRODUCTION

THE *Risālat al-Laduniyya* [1] is a short treatise giving an account of al-Ghazālī's religious philosophy, in a compact form. It includes his theory of Knowledge, which is discussed very fully in regard to its nature, its different types, and the

[1] Numbered No. 40 in Brockelmann's *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur* (vol. i, p. 423). It has been printed in Cairo (A.H. 1343) and from this edition I have made my translation, after collation with the India Office MS. 612, which gives a better reading in several instances. There are also Cairo texts printed in A.H. 1328 and A.H. 1353 (the latter in the collection entitled *al-Jawāhir al-Ghawālī*). It is found in MS. under the title of "Fī bayān 'ilm al-Ladunī", Berlin, 3210. It seems to be generally accepted as a genuine work of Ghazālī and is included among his writings by Ḥājjī Khalīfa; the theory of Knowledge set forth here and the psychological doctrine are almost identical with those of the *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*.

means by which it is acquired. The author gives special attention here to Revealed Knowledge and distinguishes between Revelation (وحی), which was limited to the prophets and ceased with them, and Inspiration (الهام), which is granted also to the saints and is, in fact, the awakening of the individual, human soul, by Universal Soul.

Ghazālī also touches here upon the possibility of attaining transcendental knowledge during sleep (cf. pp. 359 and 366 below), a possibility admitted by Muḥammad himself, and evidently of great interest to Muslim writers.[1] In the *Kīmīyā' al-Sa'āda* Ghazālī expresses this belief more plainly, where he writes: "In sleep the gate of the senses is closed and the gate of the inner world is opened to the sleeper, and the mysteries of the Divine World and the Preserved Tablet are revealed to him, as by a radiant Light."

The treatise also includes a full consideration of the nature and origin of the human soul, its capacity to apprehend Universals, and the immortality which is inherent in its spirituality. The relation of the soul to the body is also clearly defined.

The chief interest of this little work lies, perhaps, in the fact that Ghazālī here frankly accepts a doctrine which is so close to the Plotinian theory of emanation that it is hardly

[1] Cf. Ibn Khaldūn, i, p. 211, and D. B. Macdonald's discussion of the question in *The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam*, chapter iii.

[2] p. 14. It is interesting to compare the view of a modern mystic (George Russell): "I do not know of any psychology which so spiritually excites me as this of the nightly return of the soul to the Divine order, that we who through the day are absorbed in petty labours do go back to an unfallen world, unto our own high magnificence and are in council with the Cosmocratores. There are many who have symbolic dreams and if they brooded on them I am sure they would come to have faith in that dweller in the innermost . . . how many times when I meditated before sleeping did I not seem to myself to be sinking into light. How often when waking had I not the feeling that I had been cast forth and was rejected by heaven. . . . I tried passionately from departing lights, fleeting visionary presences and intuition, to conjecture what wonders the soul may have known, with what beings it may have been in some high companionship." A. E., *Song and its Fountains*, pp. 87, 109, 118.

lead it up to God. It must rise above passion and self-seeking, it must detach itself from the downward drag of the body, from the system of sense with its earthly desires and impulses—all of which tend to mortality and corruption—and seek to be restored to the unity of Universal Soul (cf. pp. 200, 369 ff., 372 below). But the soul needs to ascend still higher to that which is nearer to the Absolute One than Universal Soul, to Mind, after whom, and from whom, Soul is. Then the soul, raised to the Intellectual-Principle, finds the actuality of what is potential within it and can attain to all knowledge. "All things are transparent and there is nothing dark or resistant, but every being is manifest to every other."[1] (Cf. pp. 198, 361, 363, 365, 367 below.)

But the final goal, in the Plotinian teaching, is the Absolute One, the Primal Source of the soul, and, to attain it, the soul must divest itself of all that it has assumed in its descent until it has passed beyond all that is other than God, and looks at last upon the Divine Vision. Then it has reached the end of its quest, it has attained to the Unitive life, and has returned again to its Divine Origin. "The soul restored to Likeness goes to its Like and holds of the Supreme all that Soul can hold . . . by this way (that leads to God) it finds itself . . . it abandons Being to become a Beyond-Being . . . man knows himself now to be an image of the Supreme . . . this is the life of God and of Godlike men, a life without love of the world, a flight of the Alone to the Alone."[2]

To this final consummation Ghazālī makes little allusion in this treatise, though it is evidently in his mind. It is one of the incommunicable mysteries into the discussion of which it is not lawful to enter, though he writes of it more plainly in other treatises (e.g. the *Mishkāt al-Anwār* and the *Rawḍat al-Ṭālibīn*). Unification (توحيد) he will admit, but the possibility of identity (اتحاد), which is the Plotinian Union, is not to be acknowledged openly by one who reckons

[1] *Ennead*, v, 8, 4. [2] Ibid., vi, 9, 11.

himself an orthodox Muslim. Yet Ghazālī approaches the subject here and brings Qur'ānic evidence to bear on the origin of the human spirit as being one with the Divine (cf. pp. 197 ff. below); he accepts the fact that it is able to contemplate the Invisible, that it can receive of the Divine Radiance without mediation (cf. p. 365 below), that it may attain to wisdom, victory, perfection (pp. 372, 373 below), to the exercise of supernatural power even in this world, and to immortality, which is the life of God Himself (cf. pp. 198, 369 below).

The Dissemination of the Doctrine

While still a student Ghazālī made it his business to secure a thorough knowledge of the system of philosophy which had been developed in the East, on a Greek foundation, and he carried this study still further while occupying his Chair of Divinity at the Nizamiyya College in Baghdad. Then, during his sojourn in Syria, for the experiential study of Ṣūfism, and during his later travels, and especially during his residence in Alexandria, he was in close contact with Hellenistic culture.[1]

Though he publicly rejected the system of the philosophers and stated his conviction that true religion must be based on the experience of the soul, enlightened by revelation from above, thus accepting the doctrine of the Ṣūfīs, yet his mysticism was undoubtedly affected by philosophic speculations and chiefly by the doctrines of the Neo-Platonic school. These were available to him, as to other Arab scholars, in the so-called *Theology of Aristotle*, a translation of Porphyry's commentary on the *Enneads* (iv, v, vi) of Plotinus, of which the earliest version in Arabic appeared in A.D. 840. A number of the philosophical terms used in the *Risālat al-Laduniyya*, such as Universal Mind (العقل الكلّي) and Universal Soul

[1] For a full and most illuminating life of Ghazālī, cf. D. B. Macdonald, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. xx, 1899, pp. 72 ff.

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(النفس الكلية) and the description of the soul as an immaterial substance (جوهر مجرد), together with whole phrases employed by Ghazālī, are found in the *Theology* (cf. pp. 191, 193, 194, 197, 198, 372 below).

al-Kindī (born before the middle of the ninth century, died 260/873), who was known to his contemporaries as "The Philosopher of the Arabs", made use of the *Theology* and developed the doctrine of the Godhead manifesting itself first through Mind and then Soul, the Universal Soul from which the human soul is an emanation. He also emphasizes the fact that the soul is a simple and imperishable substance, united with a body, but independent of it (cf. pp. 193, 197, 198 ff. below). He lays stress on the capacity of the Mind—synonymous with "soul", "spirit", and "heart", the essence of man—to conceive of the Universal, the spiritual Form. All of this is stressed here by Ghazālī (cf. p. 194 below).

The philosophy first systematized by al-Kindī was developed by al-Fārābī (ob. 339/950),[1] whom Ghazālī regarded as representative, with Ibn Sīnā, of the Islamic philosophers.[2] He also accepted the so-called *Theology of Aristotle* and made use of it, believing it to be genuine, and he, too, accepts the Plotinian theory of emanation. The human soul gives completion to the body (cf. pp. 193, 200 below). The potentiality within the human spirit, he holds, is brought to actuality by Universal Soul, so that man's knowledge is a contribution from above, not something which he acquires by his own effort (cf. pp. 368, 370 below). In the light of that supernatural knowledge man is able to understand the inner meaning of corporeal forms and thereby what he perceives with the senses is developed into rational knowledge (cf. p. 367 below). al-Fārābī also indicates the longing of the soul for what is above it and its final absorption into the One.[3]

[1] For an interesting recent study of al-Fārābī cf. I. Madkur, *La Place d'al-Fārābī dans l'école philosophique musalmane* (Paris, 1936).

[2] *Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl*, p. 11.

[3] On both al-Kindī and al-Fārābī cf. T. J. de Boer, *History of Philosophy in Islam* (tr. E. R. Jones), pp. 97 ff.

al-Fārābī's teaching, and the Neo-Platonic doctrines in general, were incorporated into the great Encyclopædia of the Brethren of Purity, an association formed at Basra in the second half of the tenth century. Although Ghazālī refers with great contempt to the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* and its teaching as being "flimsy" and "shallow",[1] yet he seems to have made considerable use of it, for ideas and actual phrases included there are found not only in this *Risāla*, but elsewhere in his writings.[2] In the *Rasā'il* the Plotinian doctrine of emanation is again set forth, the first emanation being the Creative Spirit (Universal Mind) and the second Universal Soul, the relation of Soul to Mind, as we have seen above, being likened to that of the moonlight to the sunlight, while the relation of Mind to the One is like that of the sunlight to the sun. From Universal Soul emanates the human individual soul, which is simple, self-existent, able to know and act, and the *Rasā'il* describes how the potentiality within the soul is brought to actuality and how the rational soul delights in knowledge and understanding (cf. pp. 191, 194, 200, 361 below). The *Rasā'il* includes also a section on Revelation (وحى) and Inspiration (الهام), with which Ghazālī deals so fully in this treatise (pp. 363 ff. below), and it shows how souls can be fitted to receive revealed knowledge, only by purification (cf. pp. 363 ff. below).

Ibn Sīnā (370/980–428/1087) the other representative of Islamic philosophy mentioned by Ghazālī,[3] teaches the existence of a First and Necessary Being, the One, from Whom, by a process of emanation, Mind and Soul proceed. He is chiefly interested in the Soul, which he holds to be a simple essence, imperishable, rational, having no essential connection with the body.[4] In his *Qaṣīda* on the Soul he maintains that

[1] *Munqidh*, p. 19.

[2] Cf. references below.

[3] Cf. also Shahrastānī, "the School of Aristotle and his followers, such as Proclus, Alexander of Aphrodisias, and Themistius, to whom moderns like al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā among Islamic followers pay allegiance," *Nihāyat al-Iqdām*, p. 1 (ed. A. Guillaume).

[4] Cf. pp. 196 ff., below.

the soul is a prisoner in this world, to which it has descended from the world above, being "exalted, ineffable, glorious, heavenly". Slowly it grows accustomed to this desolate sphere. When at last the veil is raised and it looks once more upon the Invisible, it is filled with joy, and having become purified from all stain of the flesh, and made aware of the inner meaning of all things, it returns whence it came.[1] The soul, he teaches, gains knowledge of the outer world by means of the External and Internal Senses, which are situated in the brain—in the forefront the General or Co-ordinating sense, in the middle the Apperception, in the back of it Memory (cf. p. 199 below). Through the exercise of the Reason what is potential within the soul reaches actuality, through the enlightening influence of Universal Soul, in accordance with the degree of receptivity within the soul and its state of preparedness, which is the result of the practice of the virtues (cf. pp. 365, 371, 373 below).

Purpose and General Contents of the Risāla

This little treatise was written, as the author states in his introduction, at the request of a friend who desired him to deal with the revealed knowledge of Divine things, the existence of which was denied by certain of the orthodox theologians, who could conceive of no knowledge beyond that acquired by human effort.

The *Risāla*, therefore, deals primarily with Knowledge, and since the Soul is that by which the human being is enabled to know, the author, after defining Knowledge, proceeds to discuss the origin, nature, and capacities of the Soul, and states that his own use of the term is limited to the "rational soul", known also as the "spirit" and the "heart".

The author then deals with the different types of Knowledge and their branches, including the knowledge of the Ṣūfīs, and proceeds to consider the different methods by which Knowledge can be acquired, from without and from within.

[1] Ẓiyā Bey, *Kharābāt*, i, pp. 283, 284.

He discusses the capacity of the human soul for the acquisition of Knowledge and shows how human souls vary in regard to their receptivity and the degree to which their original capacity has been affected by infirmity acquired in this world. In conclusion he deals briefly with the true meaning of "Knowledge from on high", and the means of attaining it.

Analysis of the Contents

Introduction.—The reason for writing the treatise stated. Scepticism on the part of the orthodox concerning the existence and the possibility of revealed knowledge. The author's claim that such scepticism is due only to ignorance, and his acceptance of the challenge to establish his claim.

Chapter I.—Definition of Knowledge, of the Knower, and the Known. The highest knowledge that of God Himself. Knowledge and ignorance contrasted and the superiority of knowledge demonstrated.

Chapter II.—Concerning the Soul, which is the "tablet" of knowledge. The nature of body and soul contrasted. The different "faculties" within the human personality: the animal spirit; the natural spirit. The Rational Soul as the true essence of man: belonging to the world of *amr*: possessed of an "inward eye". The relation of soul to body. The soul's search for Knowledge and pre-occupation with it.

Chapter III.—The two types of Knowledge, Religious and Intellectual. Religious subdivided into (*a*) the Knowledge of fundamentals, including the doctrine of the Unity, Life and Death, and eschatology. The Mutakallimūn: the science of *Tafsīr*, requiring a knowledge of philology and literature. (*b*) Knowledge derived from these fundamentals, dealing with three obligations: what is due to God, comprising the duties of worship and religious observance; what is due to men, in business transactions and contractual obligations; what is due to oneself in the development of character. Intellectual knowledge divided into three classes: (*a*) comprising Mathematics, Logic, and their derivatives; (*b*) Natural

Science and its branches; (*c*) Metaphysics, including the study of the Divine and all other beings and substances.

Chapter IV.—The Knowledge of the Ṣūfīs and its subject-matter, stated briefly.

Chapter V.—Methods of acquiring Knowledge: (i) Submission to human teaching, a well-recognized method. (ii) Submission to Divine teaching, divided into (*a*) from within by Reflection and the power of inference, by which the potentiality within the soul becomes actuality; (*b*) from without, by the Divine revelation, limited to the Prophets, and Inspiration, the awakening of the individual soul by Universal Soul, common to the prophets and the saints. The nature and functions of Universal Mind and Universal Soul.

Chapter VI.—The differences of souls, in regard to the acquisition of Knowledge, due to the influence of infirmities while in the body. The remedies for such infirmities, and the restoration of the human soul to its original purity by its reception of the light of Universal Soul.

Chapter VII.—The true meaning of Knowledge from on high: three means of attaining it. (i) Extensive study; (ii) Genuine self-discipline and true meditation; (iii) Reflection, whereby the door into the Invisible World is opened to the soul of man.

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

Treatise Concerning Knowledge from on High

Praise be to God, Who hath adorned the hearts of His chosen servants with the light of Saintship, and hath nurtured their spirits with all loving kindness and, with the key of knowledge, hath opened the door of Unification (*tawḥīd*), to the gnostics among the wise.[1] I pray for the blessing of God

[1] Cf. al-Hujwīrī, "Real Unification consists in asserting the unity of a thing and in having a perfect knowledge of its unity . . . I declare that Unification is a mystery revealed by God to His servants and that it cannot be expressed in language at all." *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* (tr. R. A. Nicholson), pp. 278 ff. Cf. also *Rawḍat al-Ṭālibīn*, p. 153.

upon our lord Muḥammad, the lord of the Muslims, who summoned men to the true faith and carried out its obligations, who guided the community in the right road; and upon his family, who dwell in the sanctuary of protection.

Know that one of my friends related of a certain theologian that he denied the esoteric knowledge (العلم الغيبي), upon which the elect of the Ṣūfīs rely, and to which the followers of the Mystic Way trace back their origin. For they declare that knowledge from on high (العلم اللدنى) is greater and more reliable than the types of knowledge acquired and obtained by study. My friend declared that the aforesaid person asserted: "I am unable to conceive of the knowledge of the Ṣūfīs and I do not suppose that anyone in the world can speak of true knowledge (العلم الحقيقى) as the result of reflection and deliberation apart from study and acquisition." Then I said: "He does not seem to have investigated the different methods of attainment, nor to know the power of the human soul and its qualities, and its capacity for receiving impressions of the Invisible and for attaining to knowledge of the Divine World (الملكوت).[1]

[1] Cf. *Iḥyā'*, iv, p. 216 (ll. 7 ff.): "Know that there are worlds through which you must pass, the material, visible world (عالم الملك والشهادة) is the first . . . and this stage may be passed without difficulty. The second is the Divine World (عالم الملكوت) and it is beyond me, and when you have passed beyond me, you have arrived at its stations. It contains extensive deserts and wide expanses and lofty mountains and fathomless seas, and I know not how you will be saved therein. The third is the Celestial World (عالم الجبروت) . . . which is like a ship moving between the land and the water and it has not the constant motion of the water, nor has it the complete immobility of the land and its stability, and everyone who walks on the land walks in the world of *mulk* and *shahāda*, and when he is strong enough to sail on a ship he is like one who walks in the world of *jabarūt* and when he reaches the stage of being able to walk on the water without a ship, he walks in the world of *malakūt*, without sinking. When you are not able to walk upon the water, then depart, for you have passed beyond the land, and have left the ship behind, and there remains before you only the limpid water." Cf. also *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, pp. 122 ff., and A. J. Wensinck, *The Relation between al-Ghazālī's Cosmology and his Mysticism.*

Then my friend said: "Yes, that man declares that knowledge consists only of jurisprudence, and interpretation of the Qur'ān and scholastic theology are sufficient, and there is no knowledge beyond them: and these sciences are acquired only by submitting to instruction and by thorough knowledge." I replied: "Yes, and how is the science of interpretation to be learnt? For the Qur'ān is an ocean comprehending all things, and not all that it signifies, nor the full truth of its interpretation, are to be found in these literary works which are in general circulation, but the interpretation thereof goes beyond what that claimant knows." My friend said: "That man knows only those commentaries which are well known and spoken about, attributed to Qushayrī and Tha'labī and Māwardī and others." I said: "He has strayed a long way from the straight road (which leads to) the truth, for Sulamī, in the *Tafsīr*,[1] made a collection of the statements of those who attained to something like certainty (i.e. the Ṣūfīs), and these statements are not mentioned in other commentaries. That man who reckons that knowledge consists only of jurisprudence and scholastic theology and a commentary which is well known, apparently does not know the different branches of knowledge and their distinctions and classes, and their true significance, and their outward expression, and their inward meaning. But it is not unusual for one ignorant of a thing to deny that thing and that claimant has not tasted the draught of spirituality nor attained to knowledge from on high, and how can he acknowledge that, and I am not satisfied with his acknowledgment of it, in pretending to know or guessing at what, in fact, he did not know."

Then that friend said: "I wish that you would mention some of the classes of the sciences and prove that the knowledge which you claim (i.e. inspired knowledge) is valid, and attribute it to yourself and maintain your assertion of it."

I replied: "This which you seek to have explained is exceedingly difficult, but I will show what are its antecedents,

[1] *Kitāb Ḥaqā'iq al-Tafsīr.*

as far as I can, and in accordance with the time at my disposal and what occurs to my mind. I do not want to prolong the discussion, for the best discourse is that which is brief and shows the way." I have asked God for His favour and help and I have mentioned the request of my good friend, in regard to this officious proceeding on my part.

CHAPTER I

Know that Knowledge (العلم) is the presentation to itself, by the rational, tranquillized soul (النفس الناطقة المطمئنة)[1] of the real meaning of things and their outward forms, when divested of matter, in themselves, and their modes and their quantities and their substances and their essences, if they are simple (i.e. uncompound). And the knower is the one who comprehends and perceives and apprehends, and that which is known is the essence (ذات) of the thing, the knowledge of which is engraved upon the soul. The nobility of the knowledge is in accordance with the nobility of the thing known, and the rank of the knower corresponds to the rank of the knowledge. There is no doubt that the most excellent of things known, and the most glorious, and the highest of them, and the most honoured, is God the Maker, the Creator, the Truth, the One. For knowledge of Him, which is knowledge of the Unity, is the most excellent branch

[1] Cf. 'Abd al-Razzāq's definition of النفس المطمئنة "that of which the spiritual illumination has been perfected so that it has been stripped of its vices and has replaced them by virtues and it has turned its face towards the heart (i.e. the highest self), following it in ascending towards the Invisible World, having been cleansed from all defilement, being assiduous in devotion, dwelling in the highest of abodes, so that its Lord may address it face to face." For النفس الناطقة cf. Plotinus, *Ennead*, v, 9, 7, and *Theology of Aristotle*, pp. 6, 120 ff., and also Ghazālī, *al-Ma'ārif al-'Aqliyya*, fols. 8*a*, 11*b*, and *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Safā*, "Rational souls rejoice in knowledge and understanding. When the rational soul has awakened from the sleep of neglect, the eye of insight is opened for her and she beholds her teacher and recognizes her Maker and therewith yearns for her Creator." iii, pp. 270, 271.

of knowledge, and the most glorious and the most perfect, and this knowledge is necessary, it must be acquired by all rational beings, as the Lawgiver (upon whom be blessing) said : " The search for knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim." He said also (may God bless him) : " Seek knowledge even in China," and he who possesses this knowledge is the most honourable of those who know. For this reason God distinguished such men by giving them the highest rank, saying : " God bears witness that there is no God but He and (so also do) the angels and men endued with knowledge."[1] Those who have absolute knowledge of the Unity are the prophets and after them the theologians, who are the heirs of the prophets.

But this knowledge, though it is excellent in essence and perfect in itself, does not do away with the other types of knowledge ; indeed, it is not attained except by means of many antecedents, and those antecedents cannot be ordered aright except through various sciences, such as the science of the heavenly bodies and the spheres and the science dealing with the things that God has made. From knowledge of the Unity are derived other branches of knowledge and we shall classify them in their place.

Know that knowledge is excellent in itself, without consideration of the thing known, so that even the knowledge of sorcery is excellent in itself, even though it be futile. That is because knowledge is the contrary of ignorance, and ignorance is one of the accompaniments of darkness, and darkness belongs to the sphere of immobility, and immobility is near to non-existence, and what is false and misleading is to be classed with this. For the sphere of knowledge is the sphere of what is existent, and existence is better than non-existence, for guidance and truth and activity and light are all linked up with existence. Since existence is better than non-existence, then knowledge is more excellent than ignorance, for ignorance is like blindness and darkness, and knowledge is like sight and

[1] Sūra iii, 16.

light and " the blind man shall not be held equal to him who sees, nor darkness to light." [1] God made this manifest when He said : " Shall they who have knowledge and they who have it not, be held equal ? " [2] Then, since knowledge is better than ignorance and ignorance is one of the accompaniments of the body and knowledge is one of the attributes of the soul, the soul is more honourable than the body.

Now knowledge has many divisions, which we shall enumerate in another chapter ; and for the one who knows there are numerous paths in the search for knowledge, which we shall mention elsewhere. And now, after you have realized the excellence of knowledge, all that you need to do is to attain to understanding of the soul, which is the tablet of knowledge, and its abode and place of habitation. That is because the body is not an abode for knowledge, for bodies are limited and will not contain the many branches of knowledge ; indeed, they can receive only impressions and inscriptions, but the soul is able to receive all types of knowledge without let or hindrance or fatigue or cessation, and we will explain briefly what the soul is.

CHAPTER II

Concerning the Soul and the Human Spirit

Know that God Most High created man from two different things, one of them the body, which is evil, gross, subject to generation and corruption, composite, made up of parts, earthy, whose nature cannot be complete except by means of something else,[3] and that other is the soul, which is substantial (جوهرى), simple,[4] enlightened, comprehending, acting, moving, giving completion to instruments and bodies.[5] For God Most High compounded the flesh of elements of nutriment and increased it with particles of blood,[6] and laid down a rule

[1] Sūra xxxv, 20.
[2] Sūra xxxix, 12.
[3] Cf. Plotinus, *Ennead*, iv, 7, 1 ; *Theology of Aristotle*, pp. 160 ff.
[4] Cf. *Ennead*, iv, 8, 8, and *Theology of Aristotle*, p. 41.
[5] Ibid., p. 42.
[6] The Cairo edition reads رماد.

for it and arranged its affairs and appointed its limits. Then the substance of the soul was made manifest by His command, the One, the Perfect, the Most Excellent, the Benefactor. Now by the "soul", I do not mean the force which seeks for sustenance, nor the force which stirs up to lust and passion, nor the force which resides in the heart, producing life, which issues in sensibility and activity (proceeding) from the heart to all the members, for this force is called the animal spirit (روحا حيوانيا), and feeling and movement and lust and anger are among its "troops". And that force which seeks for sustenance, which resides in the liver, for the disposal of food, is called the natural spirit (روحا طبيعيا), and the digestion and secretion are among its attributes; and the power of imagination and of procreation and growing and the rest of the natural powers are all of them servants to the flesh, and the flesh is the servant of the animal spirit, because it receives its powers from it and acts in accordance with its instigation.

But by the soul I mean only that perfect, simple substance which is concerned solely with remembering and studying and reflection and discrimination and careful consideration.[1] It is receptive of all types of knowledge and does not weary of receiving images which are abstract, immaterial; and this substance is the ruler of the spirits (i.e. those aforementioned) and the controller of the faculties, and all serve it and comply with its command. Now the rational soul, by which I mean this substance, has a special name with every group of people: the philosophers call this substance "the rational soul", and the Qur'ān calls it "the soul at rest" and the "spirit which is of the *amr* of God"[2] and the Ṣūfīs call it the "spirit" and sometimes the "heart", but though the names differ the meaning is one, it does not differ. In our opinion the "heart" and the "spirit" and the "soul at rest" are all names for the rational soul, and the rational soul is the living

[1] Cf. *Theol. of Aris.*, p. 43.

[2] Sūra xvii, 87.

substance which lives and acts and comprehends, and when we use the term "spirit" absolutely, or the "heart", we mean by it only this substance.[1] But the Ṣūfīs call the animal spirit "soul" (i.e. the lower self = نفس) and the Shar‘ has declared that to be the case, and says: "The greatest of your enemies is your *nafs*." And also the Lawgiver used the term *nafs* absolutely and, indeed, strengthened it by putting it in the construct case, for he said: "Your *nafs* which is between your two sides," and he indicated by this term only the force of sensual desire and passion, for they are both aroused by the heart [2] which rests between the two sides.

So when you have realized the distinction between the (different) names, then know that those who have investigated the matter express this delicate substance in different ways, and they hold different views concerning it. For the scholastic theologians, who are skilled in discussion, reckon the soul to be a body and state that it is a subtle body, corresponding to this gross body, and they hold that there is no difference between the spirit and the flesh except in respect of subtlety and grossness. Then certain of them reckon the spirit as an accident, and some of the physicians incline towards this view: and certain of them consider the blood to be a spirit—and all of them were content to limit their consideration to what they were able to conceive of, and they did not go as far as the third division.

Know that the three divisions are the body and the accident and the simple substance. For the animal spirit is a subtle body, like a lamp, which has been kindled and placed in the glass-vessel of the heart, by which I mean (here) that cone-shaped object which is suspended in the breast, and the life is the light of the lamp, and the blood is its oil, and feeling and movement are its flames, and lust is its heat, and passion is its smoke: and the force seeking for sustenance (i.e.

[1] Cf. *Iḥyā'*, iv, p. 23. "By the heart I mean the inner self which belongs to the world of *amr*."

[2] Cf. p. 194 above.

appetite), which is situated in the liver, is its servant and guard and protector, and this spirit is found in all the animals, for it is shared by the cattle and other beasts and man, and it is a body and the impressions it receives are accidents. Now this spirit does not follow the right road to knowledge and does not know the path which the creature should take, nor what is due to the Creator. It is only a servant, a captive which dies with the death of the body. If the oil [1] is in excess, that lamp is extinguished by excess of heat, and if it is lacking (the lamp) is extinguished by excessive cold, and its extinction is the cause of the death of the body. Neither the Word of the Creator, praise be to Him, nor the duties imposed by the legislator (i.e. the Prophet) are (meant) for this spirit, for the brutes and the rest of the animal creation are without duties imposed, and not to them are the ordinances of the Canon Law addressed. Man is laid under obligations and addressed because of another meaning (i.e. attached to the term "spirit") found only in himself, which is additional and applicable especially to him. And that meaning signifies the rational soul and the spirit at rest, and this spirit is not a body nor an accident, for it (proceeded) at the command of God Most High, as He said: "Say, the spirit (proceedeth) at the command of my Lord," [2] and He said also: "O soul at rest, return unto thy Lord, satisfied with Him, giving satisfaction unto Him." [3]

Now the command [4] of the Creator Most High is not a body nor an accident, but a Divine force like Universal Mind (العقل الاول) [5] and the Tablet and the Pen,[6] and they

[1] The Cairo text reads "blood".

[2] Sūra xvii, 87.

[3] Sūra lxxxix, 27–30.

[4] On the world of *amr* cf. *Iḥyā'*, iv, p. 23.

[5] Cf. *Theol. of Aristotle*, p. 39, and Plotinus, "The Intellectual-Principle . . . the offspring of God. . . . For here is contained all that is immortal; nothing here but is Divine Mind; all is God." *Ennead*, v, 1, 4 ff.

[6] "The Pen is that which God created to enable the hearts of men to be inscribed with knowledge." *Iḥyā'*, iii, p. 14. Identified with Universal Mind in *al-Ma'ārif al-'Aqliyya*, fol. 21*b*.

are simple substances, free from materiality; indeed, they are incorporeal splendours, intellectual, without sensibility. Now the spirit and the heart, in our use of the term, is derived from those substances,[1] and is not susceptible of corruption and does not disappear nor pass into nothingness nor die, but is separated from the body and expects to return to it on the Day of Resurrection: and that was declared to be the case in the Shar‘ and was authenticated in those sciences which are established by categorical proofs. So it is plainly proved that the rational spirit is not a body nor an accident; indeed, it is an abiding, eternal substance, and incorruptible. So we have no need to recapitulate the proofs and add to the evidence, because they are well established and have been recorded. Let him who wishes to verify them consult the books suitable for that purpose.

But our method is not to bring forward proofs, but to rely upon clairvoyance, and we depend upon the vision of faith and the fact that God related the spirit sometimes to Himself and sometimes to His command and sometimes to His glory for He said: "I breathed into him of My Spirit,"[2] and He said also: "Say, the Spirit (proceedeth) at the command of my Lord." Also He said: "And We breathed into him of Our Spirit." Now God Most High is too glorious to attach unto Himself a body or an accident, because of their lowliness and their liability to change and their swift dissolution and corruption. But the Lawgiver (God's blessing upon him) said: "The spirits are like troops assembled," and he said: "The spirits of the martyrs are in the crops of green birds." Now the accident does not subsist after the substance has passed away, because it does not subsist in itself. For the body is subject to dissolution as it was subject to being compounded of matter and form, which is set forth in the books. And from these verses and traditions and intellectual proofs,

[1] Cf. Plotinus, "Sprung from the Intellectual-Principle, Soul is intellective . . . its substantial existence comes from the Intellectual-Principle," *Ennead*, v, 1, 3.

[2] Sūra xv, 29; Sūra xxxviii, 72.

we have come to know that the spirit is a simple substance, perfect, having life in itself, and from it is derived what makes the body [1] sound or what corrupts it. For the natural and the animal spirits and all the bodily powers are all among its troops. We have learnt, too, that this substance receives the images of things known [2] and (understands) the real meaning of existent things, without being concerned with their actual selves or corporeal forms, for the rational soul is capable of knowing the real meaning of humanity without seeing a human being, as it is acquainted with the angels and demons, but has no need to see their forms, since the senses of most human beings do not attain to them.

Moreover, certain of the Ṣūfīs maintain that the heart possesses an organ of sight like the body, and outward things are seen with the outward eye, and inward realities with the eye of the mind. For the Apostle of God (may God bless him) said : " Every servant has two eyes in his heart," and they are eyes by which he perceives the Invisible, and when God wishes well to one of His servants He opens the eyes of his heart so that he may see what is hidden from his outward sight.[3] Now this spirit does not die with the death of the body, for God Most Holy summons it to His door and says : " Return unto thy Lord " : it is only separated from, and discards, the body, and because of its separation from the body, the bodily and the natural powers cease to function and their activity is stilled, and that stillness is called Death.

Those who follow the Way, I mean the Ṣūfīs, depend upon the spirit and the heart, more than they depend upon the corporeal form. Now since the spirit (proceeded) from the

[1] For " body " the Cairo edition reads " religion " (دين).

[2] Cf. Plotinus, v, 3, 3.

[3] Cf. *Iḥyā'*, iii, p. 15. " The inward eye is the eye of the soul, which is subtle, perceptive, and it is like the rider and the body like the horse, and the blindness of the rider is more harmful to him than the blindness of the horse." Cf. also iv, p. 430. " The Invisible Divine World is not seen with the outward eye, but only with another eye, which was created in the heart of every man, but man has veiled it by his lusts and worldly pre-occupations and he has ceased to see with it." Cf. also *Rawḍat al-Ṭālibīn*, p. 164.

command of the Most High Creator, it is like a stranger in the body and it will look towards its Source [1] and unto Him it will return. Therefore it will obtain more benefit from its Source than it will from the bodily form, when it is strong and is not defiled by the defilements of human nature. When you have come to know that the spirit is a simple substance, and you have learnt that the flesh must have a habitation and is an accident, for it subsists only through the substance, then know that this substance does not abide in any place, nor dwell in a habitation,[2] and the body is not the habitation of the spirit, nor the abode of the heart, but the body is the instrument of the spirit and the implement of the heart and the vehicle of the soul. The spirit is not attached to the particles of the body, nor detached from it, but it concerns itself with the body, is beneficial to it and generous towards it.[3]

Now the first manifestation of its light is on the brain, because the brain is its special place of manifestation: it takes a guard for itself from its forefront, and from the midst of it a prime minister and controller, and from the back part of it a treasury and a treasurer and a guardian, and from all parts of it infantry and cavalry. From the animal spirit (it takes for itself) a servant, and from the natural spirit a sergeant, and from the body it takes a vehicle, and from this world a sphere of action. From life it obtains goods and wealth, and from activity merchandise, and from knowledge profit. The next world provides it with a destination and place of return and the Canon Law with a way and a road. The head-strong soul (النفس الامارة) gives it a guard and a leader, and the reproachful soul (النفس اللوامة) an admonisher.[4] The senses are its spies and allies, and from religion it takes a coat of mail, while the reason serves it as instructor, and the

[1] Cf. Plotinus, vi, 8. "The soul's movement will be about its Source."
[2] Cf. *Theology of Aristotle*, pp. 30, 41.
[3] Cf. Plotinus, v, 1, 10, "that phase of the soul . . . having to do with the body, creating, moulding, spending its care upon it."
[4] Cf. Sūras lxxv, 2; xii, 53.

sensibility as pupil, and the Lord, glory be to Him, is behind all these, on the watch.[1]

The soul then, being such as this, with this equipment, does not advance towards this gross body and is not essentially attached to it, but brings it benefit, while itself facing towards its Creator, and its Creator commands it to obtain profit, to the appointed end. So then the spirit, during this journey (i.e. through this life), is concerned only with the search for knowledge, because knowledge will be its adornment in the world to come, for " wealth and children are the ornament of life in this world ".[2] As the eye is concerned with the sight of visible things and the hearing is assiduous in listening to sounds, and the tongue is alert to form words, and as the animal spirit seeks the delights of passion, and the natural spirit loves the pleasures of eating and drinking, (so also) the spirit at rest, by which I mean the heart, seeks only knowledge and is not satisfied except with it, and it learns throughout its life, and takes pleasure in knowledge all its days, until the time of its separation, and if it welcomes anything other than knowledge, it is concerned with it only in the interests of the body, not out of desire for the body itself and love of its origin. Then, when you have come to know the states of the spirit and have realized that it is immortal, and understand its love for knowledge and passionate desire for it, you ought to consider the different types of knowledge, for they are many, and we will enumerate them briefly.

[1] Sūra lxxxix, 14.

[2] Sūra xviii, 44.

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(To be concluded.)

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PART III.—JULY

Al-Risālat Al-Laduniyya. By Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad Al-Ghazālī (450/1059–505/1111)

TRANSLATED BY MARGARET SMITH, M.A., D.LITT.

(*Concluded from p. 200.*)

CHAPTER III

On the Different Types of Knowledge and its Divisions

Know that Knowledge can be divided into two types, one religious knowledge (شرعى) and the other intellectual (عقلى), and most of the branches of religious knowledge are intellectual in the opinion of him who knows them, and most of the branches of intellectual knowledge belong to the religious code, in the opinion of him who understands them. "And he, to whom God does not commit light, has no light." [1]

1. The first type of Knowledge, which is religious knowledge, is divided into two classes, (*a*) one of them concerned with fundamental principles (الاصول), and it is the knowledge of the Unity, and this knowledge is concerned with the Essence of God Most High and His eternal attributes and His creative attributes and His essential attributes, which are set forth in the Divine Names, as mentioned. It is concerned also with the states of the Prophets and the Imams after them and the Companions. It deals, further, with the states of death and life and with the states of the Resurrection and the Summons and the Assembly

[1] Sūra xxiv, 40.

and the Judgment and the Vision of God Most High. Those who concern themselves with this type of knowledge have recourse first to the verses of the Qur'ān, which is the Word of God Most High, then to the traditions of the Apostle (may God bless him), then to intellectual proofs and analogy; and they took the premises of argumentation, syllogistic and eristic, and what belongs to them both, from the philosophers, and they placed most terms in other than their (right) place. In their expressions, they use such phrases as substance and accident and direction and consideration and demonstration and argument, and the meaning of each of these terms differs with each group, so that by "substance" the philosophers mean one thing and the Ṣūfīs mean another, and the scholastics something else, and so on. But it is not the purpose of this treatise to verify the meaning of the terms according to the opinions of each group and we will not enter upon it.

Now these people are specialists in the discussion of fundamental principles and the knowledge of the Unity, and their title is the *Mutakallimūn*, for the name of *kalām* has become known in connection with the knowledge of the Unity. Included also in the knowledge of fundamental principles is interpretation, for the Qur'ān is one of the greatest of things, and the most eloquent and most precious. It contains many obscure and difficult passages, which not every mind can comprehend, only that one to whom God has granted understanding of His Word. The Prophet (God bless him) has said: "There is not a verse of the Qur'ān but has a literal sense and an allegorical sense, and its allegorical sense includes another allegorical meaning up to seven allegorical meanings," and in one account, "up to nine." The Prophet said also: "Every word of the Qur'ān has a moral sense and every moral sense has also a mystical sense."[1] Now in the Qur'ān God has given information about all types of knowledge, both what is manifest of existent things and what is hidden, what is small

[1] Cf. *Kitāb al-Arba'īn*, p. 48, and L. Massignon, *La Passion d'al-Ḥallāj*, p. 704.

among them and what is great and what is perceptible and what is intelligible among them. There is an allusion to this in the Word of God, where it is stated : "There is neither a green thing nor a dry, but it is (set forth) in a clear book."[1] And God said also : "Let them meditate on His verses and let men of understanding remember."[2]

Since the subject-matter of the Qur'ān is the greatest of subjects, what commentator has done justice to it? Or what theologian has fulfilled his responsibility to it? Each one of the commentators enters upon the explanation of it in accordance with his ability, and embarks upon the exposition of it according to the capacity of his mind, and in accordance with the amount of his knowledge. For all of them said—and they spoke truly—that knowledge of the Qur'ān gives an indication of the knowledge of fundamental principles and what is derived from them, and religious and intellectual knowledge. Now the commentator ought to consider the Qur'ān from the point of view of the language and from the point of view of metaphor and from the point of view of the composition of the vocables : also from the point of view of the particulars of the grammar and of the usage of the Arabs and of the subject-matter of the philosophers and of the doctrine of the Ṣūfīs, so that his interpretation comes near to the truth of things. But if he confines himself to one point of view and is content in his exposition with one science, he has not fulfilled his duty of explaining it fully : and he finds himself opposed by the evidence of faith and the establishment of the proof.

Included also in the knowledge of fundamentals is the knowledge of the traditions, for the Prophet (God bless him) was the most eloquent of Arabs and foreigners, and was a teacher to whom revelation was made by God Most High, and his intelligence encompassed all things, high and low, and beneath every one of his words, yea, every utterance of his, are to be found seas of mysteries and treasuries of hints, therefore the

[1] Sūra vi, 59. [2] Sūra xxxviii, 28.

knowledge of his traditions and the understanding of his sayings is a great matter and an important thing. No one is able to have a thorough knowledge of the Prophet's teaching, except by training himself to imitation of the Lawgiver, and removing distortion from his heart through the straightening effect of the law of the Prophet (God bless him).

So he who wishes to discuss the interpretation of the Qur'ān and the elucidation of the Traditions and to discuss rightly, must first gain a knowledge of the language, and secure a thorough mastery of the science of grammar and be well-grounded in the inflection and declension of Arabic, and be versed in the different conjugations. For knowledge of the language is a ladder and a staircase to all the sciences, and for him who does not know the language there is no way to the study of the sciences, for he who wishes to ascend to a roof must first set up a staircase, then after that he can ascend. Now knowledge of the language is an important means and a great staircase, and he who seeks for knowledge cannot dispense with a good command of the language, for knowledge of the language is the most fundamental thing. Knowledge of the language begins with the understanding of the particles, which are represented by the separate words, and after that comes understanding of the verbs, such as the triliteral and the quadriliteral and others. It is also incumbent upon the philologist that he should investigate the poetry of the Arabs and the worthiest of it and the most perfect is the poetry of the *Jahiliyya*, for it provides a means of discipline for the mind, and refreshment for the soul. Then, after the study of that poetry and the particles and the names, it is necessary to acquire a knowledge of grammar, for in the knowledge of the language it takes the place of the lever balance for gold and silver, and logic for the science of philosophy, and prosody for poetry, and the yardstick for clothes, and the measure for grain, for in anything which is not weighed in a balance excess and deficiency is not clear. Now the knowledge of the language is a means to a knowledge of interpretation and of the

traditions, and the knowledge of the Qur'ān and the traditions is a guide to the knowledge of the Unity, and the knowledge of the Unity is that by which alone the souls of God's servants find salvation, and there is no deliverance from the fear of the Resurrection except thereby. This, then, is an analysis of the knowledge of fundamental principles.

(*b*) The second class of religious knowledge is the knowledge of what is derived (i.e. from these principles), because knowledge is either theoretical or practical and the knowledge of fundamental principles is theoretic and the knowledge of their consequences is practical, and this practical knowledge includes three obligations :—

(i) The first is what is due to God, and it consists of the essentials of religious devotion, such as purification, prayer, almsgiving, the pilgrimage, the Holy War, and devotional readings ; also the observance of feast days and the Friday prayers, and what is additional to these in the way of works of supererogation and obligatory duties.

(ii) The second is what is due to one's fellow-servants, and it includes all kinds of customary usages and takes two directions :

(*a*) One of them includes transactions, such as buying and selling, and partnership and compensatory gifts, and the lending of money and borrowing it, and retaliation and all kinds of blood-wit.

(*b*) The second of them is contractual obligation, such as marriage and divorce and manumission and servitude and the law of inheritance and what is involved in these.

The term "jurisprudence" applies to these two obligations : and jurisprudence is a noble science, profitable, universal in application, necessary ; men cannot do without it because of the universal necessity for it.

(iii) The third obligation is what is due to the self, and it is the knowledge of moral qualities. Now moral qualities are either blameworthy and ought to be rejected and abandoned, or they are praiseworthy and ought to be acquired, and the

self should be adorned with them: and what is blameworthy among qualities and what is praiseworthy of them is made plain in the Word of God Most High and in the traditions of the Prophet (God bless him). He who assumed a single one of them entered Paradise.

2. As for the second type of knowledge, which is intellectual knowledge, it is a knowledge which is difficult, intricate, including what is wrong and what is right, and it is divided into three classes.

(i) The first class, which is the beginning, comprises the science of mathematics and logic. As for mathematics, it includes arithmetic and is concerned with numbers and geometry, which is the science of dimensions and figures, and astronomy, by which I mean the science of the heavenly bodies and the stars and the regions of the earth, and what is connected therewith. From it is derived the science of astrology and the determination of the times of births and horoscopes. From mathematics is derived also the art of music, which is concerned with the relation of chords.

As for logic, it is concerned with definition and description in regard to things which are apprehended by the imagination, and it investigates things from the point of view of analogy and proof, in respect of the exact sciences. For logic follows this method, beginning with the simple terms, then proceeding to the compound terms, then to propositions, then to the syllogism, then to the moods of the syllogism, then to the search for the proof, which is the end of logic.

(ii) The second class, which is in the middle, is natural science, and the natural scientist is concerned with the universe and the component parts of the world, and substances, and accidents and with motion and rest, and the states of the heavens, and action and reaction. This science gives rise to the investigation of the states of the different classes of existent things, and the types of selves, and the humours, and the number of the senses and the way in which they perceive sensible things. Then it leads to the consideration of

the science of medicine, which is the science of bodies, and infirmities and medicines and remedies, and what belongs to them. Among its branches, also, is the science of meteorology and the science of mineralogy, and the recognition of the properties of things, and it extends to the science of alchemy, which is the treatment of ores that are ailing (i.e. base metals) in the interior of mines.

(iii) The third class, which is the highest, is the investigation of existence, then its division into the self-existent (necessary) and the contingent, then the consideration of the Creator and His Essence and all His attributes and His activities, and His command and His ordinance and His decree, and His appointment of the manifestation of existent things. In addition to that it includes the consideration of the celestial beings and simple substances and the incorporeal intelligences and the perfected souls. Then comes consideration of the states of the angels and the demons, and this extends to the knowledge of prophecy and the matter of miracles (معجزات) and the conditions of thaumaturgic gifts (كرامات) and the consideration of the souls in bliss, and the state of sleep and being awake, and the stations of dreaming. From it is derived the science of talismans and enchantments [1] and what belongs to them. Now these sciences have divisions and accidents and degrees: for a clear explanation it would be necessary to give extensive proofs, but brevity is more fitting.

CHAPTER IV

The Knowledge of the Ṣūfīs

Know that intellectual knowledge is simple in itself, but it gives rise to a composite knowledge, which includes all the states of the two simple types of knowledge, and that composite knowledge is the knowledge of the Ṣūfīs and the Way to attainment of their mystic states. For they have a special science of a plain Way of life which combines the two types of

[1] Reading النيرنجات. The Cairo text of A.H. 1343 reads الزيجات.

knowledge, and this science includes knowledge of the mystic state and the spiritual condition (الوقت)[1] and audition and ecstasy and longing and intoxication and sobriety and affirmation and effacement and poverty and the passing-away of self (الفناء), and also saintship and discipleship and (the position of) the Shaykh and the disciple and what is involved in their states, together with spiritual illumination (الزوائد),[2] and endowments and stations, and we will speak of these three types of knowledge in a special book, if God will. But now it is our intention only to enumerate the sciences and their different classes, in this treatise, and we have limited it and have enumerated them briefly, in order to summarize. So let him who desires more (than this) and a full exposition of these sciences betake himself to reading the books (which deal with them). Since the discourse setting forth the enumeration of the classes of science is ended, know for a certainty that each one of these arts and each one of these sciences demands a number of conditions in order that it may be impressed upon the souls of those who seek it, and after the enumeration of the sciences you must know the methods of study, for there are specific methods of acquiring knowledge, and we will analyse them.

CHAPTER V

Setting forth the Methods of Studying Knowledge

Know that human knowledge is acquired by two means :

(i) By submission to human teaching.

(ii) By submission to Divine teaching.

As regards the first means, it is a familiar method and a path which is easily perceived : all intelligent men acknowledge it. But as for submission to Divine teaching it is of two aspects, one of them from without and it is acquired by the

[1] For a discussion of *waqt* cf. Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, pp. 367–370.
[2] Cf. Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, p. 384.

acceptance of instruction, and the other from within and it is preoccupation with reflection.

(*a*) Now this inner reflection takes the place of study in the outer sphere. For learning is what one person gains from an individual (الشخص الجزئى) and the power of reflection[1] is what the soul gains from Universal Soul, and Universal Soul is stronger in influence and greater in power of teaching, than all learned and intelligent men.[2] Now knowledge is implanted in the souls at their beginning (i.e. when first created), with potentiality, like the seed in the earth and the gem in the depths of the sea, or in the heart of the mine: and study is the search to bring forth that thing from potentiality to actuality. For the soul of him who is taught resembles the soul of the teacher, owing to similarity of nature, and the learned man is like the sower, and the learner, in deriving profit, is like the earth, and the knowledge, with its potentiality, is like the seed, and that which is actuality is like the plant. Then, when the soul of the learner is perfected, it will be like the tree which bears fruit,[3] or the pearl brought forth from the depths of the sea. Now when the bodily powers prevail over the soul the learner has need of more study, and must spend more time on it, and he must endure trouble and much weariness in the search for profit. But when the light of reason prevails over the sensible qualities, the seeker, with but little reflection, can dispense with much study, for the

[1] i.e. the power of ratiocination. Cf. *Iḥyā'*, iv, p. 364 (l. 12): "Reflection is the beginning of—and the key to—all good . . . it is the search for the gnosis which is desired . . . as the stone strikes upon the iron and brings forth from it fire, whereby the place is illuminated and the eye is able to see after it was unseeing, and the limbs are stirred to activity, so also the flint-stone of the light of gnosis is Reflection . . . and the heart is changed because of this light . . . so the fruit of reflection is knowledge and mystic 'states'."

[2] Cf. Plotinus, iv, 1, 1, and *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*, iii, p. 275, "the irradiation of the Divine Light shed upon Universal Mind and by Universal Mind upon Universal Soul and by Universal Soul upon individual souls."

[3] Cf. *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, p. 135, on الروح الفكرى: "Its characteristic is to begin from one proposition, then to branch out into two . . . the symbol for this in this world is the Tree."

receptive soul, through a single hour's reflection, gains what the unreceptive soul does not gain by a whole year's study. So some men acquire knowledge by study and some by reflection ; and study needs reflection also, for man cannot learn all particulars and universals, nor all subjects of knowledge. But he learns something and, through reflection, infers something from what has been learnt. For most of the speculative sciences and the practical arts are the result of inference by the souls of the wise, through the clearness of their understanding and the power of their thought and the keenness of their conjectures, without a great deal of study and acquisition.

For if man did not infer something through reflection from what is first known to him, the business would be prolonged for men and the darkness of ignorance would not depart from their hearts, for the soul cannot learn all that is important to it, particulars and universals, by means of study, but some part of it by study and some by vision, just as we see is customary among men. Certain things are deduced from the inner consciousness through the clearness of a man's thought ; and the practice of the learned follows this course, and by this means the foundations of the sciences are laid. So that the geometrician does not learn all that he will need for the whole of his life, but he learns the universal principles of his science and its axioms, then after that he infers and compares. So also the physician is not able to learn in detail all the diseases of persons and their remedies, but he reflects upon what is known to him as a whole, and cures each individual according to his constitution. So also the astrologer studies the general laws of the stars, then he reflects and comes to the different determinations (i.e. horoscopes). So it is with the jurisconsult and the man of letters, and in the same manner up to the rare works of art, for one invented a musical instrument, such as the lute, by means of his reflection, and another deduced from that instrument another instrument. So likewise all the arts, bodily and sensual, the first of them

are acquired by study and the rest are the result of reflection. And when the door of thought has been opened to the soul, it has learnt how to reflect and how to return by way of conjecture to what was sought, and this man's heart is expanded and his understanding is opened and what is in his soul of potentiality becomes actuality, without excessive search or prolonged toil.

(*b*) The second means, which is the Divine teaching, is of two types :—

(i) Divine revelation (الوحى), which means that when the soul has perfected itself the defilement of human nature passes away from it and the filthiness of greed and desire, and its regard is detached from the lusts of this world, and its links with transient desires are severed, and it turns towards its Creator and Master and takes hold upon the bounty of its Author and relies upon His grace and the outpouring of His Light. Then God Most High, by His most excellent favour, welcomes that soul with full acceptance and looks upon it with (His) Divine regard, and He takes from it a tablet, and from Universal Soul a Pen which inscribes upon it all His knowledge. Then Universal Mind becomes the teacher and the sanctified soul the taught, and all knowledge is acquired by that soul and all images are impressed upon it without study and reflection.[1]

This is confirmed by the Word of God Most High to the Prophet (may God bless him), "And He made you to know what ye did not know,"[2] etc. Now the knowledge of the prophets is of a more honourable degree than all the sciences of mankind, for it is received directly, without mediation, from God Most High, and this is made plain in the story of Adam (upon him be peace) and the angels. For they studied

[1] Cf. Plotinus, v, 3, 3. "It has been strengthened still towards the perception of all that is good by the irradiation of the Intellectual Principle upon it: for this pure phase of the soul welcomes to itself the images implanted from its prior."

[2] Sūra ii, 240.

all their lives and, by different means, acquired much knowledge until they became the most learned of the creatures and the most understanding of existent things. Now Adam (upon him be peace) was not learned, because he had not studied and did not look to any teacher. So the angels vied with one another in boasting, and were arrogant and magnified themselves, and they said: "We sing Thy praises and we bless Thy Name; and we know the real meaning of things." Then Adam (upon him be peace) returned to his Creator's door and, having detached his heart from all created things, came to seek help from his Lord Most High and He taught him the names (of all things). Then He brought them forth to the angels and said: "Declare unto Me the names of these, if ye speak truly," and their state was diminished in Adam's sight and their knowledge lessened and the ship of their pride was broken and they were submerged in the sea of impotence. They said: "We have no knowledge but what Thou hast taught us," and God said: "O Adam, tell them their names."[1] Then Adam (upon him be peace) informed them concerning the hidden things of knowledge and the mysteries of the Divine Command (الامر).[2]

In the view of intelligent men it is established that the esoteric knowledge derived from revelation is greater and more certain than the sciences which are acquired (i.e. by study). Now the knowledge which is revealed came to be the heritage of the prophets and the privilege of the apostles, and God has kept the door of revelation closed since the time of our lord Muḥammad (may God bless him), who was the apostle of God (His blessing upon him) and the last of the prophets. He was the most learned of men and the most eloquent of Arabs and

[1] Sūra ii, 29 ff.

[2] Cf. *Iḥyā'*, iii, pp. 328, 329. "There are two worlds, the world of *amr* and the created world . . . every being devoid of quantity and dimension belongs to the world of *amr*"; and iv, p. 23: "The world of *amr* is what prevails over the created world." Cf. also *Kitab al-Arba'īn*, pp. 53, 54. "Sensible things have no real existence: real existence belongs (only) to the world of *amr* and *malakūt*." Cf. also *Rawḍat al-Ṭālibīn*, p. 176.

foreigners, and he used to say : " My Lord has educated me and has instructed me well." He said also to his community : " I am the most learned of you and the most God-fearing." But his knowledge was more perfect and nobler and greater only because it was the result of the Divine teaching, and he never busied himself with human learning and teaching. God said : " One mighty in power taught him." [1]

(ii) The second type is Inspiration (الهام) and Inspiration is the awakening, by Universal Soul, of the individual, human soul, in proportion to its purity and its receptivity, and the degree of its preparedness. Now Inspiration follows upon Revelation, for Revelation is the clear manifestation of the Divine Command, and Inspiration is the hinting thereat. The knowledge which is derived from revelation is called prophetic knowledge, and that which is derived from inspiration is called knowledge from on high (علم لدنيا). It is that which is attained without mediation between the soul and its Creator ; it is, indeed, like the radiance from the Lamp of the Invisible, shed upon a heart which is pure, at leisure, subtle. That is because all knowledge is attained and known in the substance of the Primal Universal Soul, (which is present in incorporeal, primal, pure substances), through its relationship to the First Intelligence (Universal Mind), which is like the relationship of Eve to Adam (upon him be peace).

It has been made clear that Universal Mind is nobler and more perfect and stronger and nearer to the Most High Creator than Universal Soul,[2] and Universal Soul is nobler and more

[1] Sūra liii, 5.

[2] Cf. Plotinus, v, i, 6. " The soul being an utterance and act of the Intellectual-Principle, as that is an utterance and act of The One," and v, 9, 4. " The Intellectual-Principle is at once something other and something more powerful than Soul and the more powerful is, in the nature of things, the prior."

Cf. also *Rasā' il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā*, " The relationship of Soul to Mind is like the relationship of moonlight to the light of the sun, and the relationship of Mind to the Creator is like the relationship of sunlight to the sun itself," iii, p. 8. Cf. Introduction, p. 179 above.

receptive and more honourable than the rest of the creation, and from the outpouring (افاضة) of Universal Mind emanates revelation, and from the irradiation of Universal Soul comes inspiration. Now revelation is the adornment of the Prophets and inspiration the ornament of the saints, but, as regards revealed knowledge, as the soul is below the intelligence, and the saint below the prophet, so also inspiration is below revelation, for it is weak in comparison with revelation, strong in comparison with vision [1] (رويا), and inspired knowledge is possessed by both prophets and saints. But revealed knowledge belongs exclusively to the apostles and ceased with them, as it belonged to Adam and Moses (upon them both be peace) and Abraham and Muḥammad (God's blessing be upon both) and others beside them of the apostles, and there is a distinction between the apostolate and the prophetic mission. For prophecy is the reception, by the sanctified soul, of the true meanings of things known and understood, from the substance of Universal Mind, and the apostolate is the conveyance of these things, known and understood, to those able to profit thereby, who are fit to receive them.[2] And it may be that some soul is fitted to receive (this knowledge), but it is not transmitted to it, on account of some hindrance or some reason.

So, then, knowledge from on high belongs to the prophets and the saints, as it did to Khiḍr (upon him be peace), for God said of him: "And We taught him knowledge from Ourself." [3] Also the Commander of the Faithful, 'Alī b. Abū Ṭālib (may God be gracious unto him), said: "The Apostle made his tongue enter my mouth [4] and a thousand gates of knowledge were opened unto me, and with each gate another

[1] i.e. in sleep. Cf. Introduction, pp. 178 ff. above.

[2] Cf. 'Abd al-Razzāq on the Prophet as the one who can give information concerning the Divine Realities, that is, the Essence of the Godhead and His Names. Cf. also p. 361 above, note (2).

[3] Sūra xviii, 64.

[4] The Cairo texts read: "I made my tongue enter into my mouth, i.e. I kept silence."

thousand gates." He said also: "If a cushion were placed for me and I were to sit upon it I would pass judgment upon the followers of the Tawrāt, by means of their Tawrāt, and on the followers of the Gospel, by means of their Gospel, and on the followers of the Qur'ān, by means of their Qur'ān." Now this rank is not attained by mere human study, but a man is adorned in this rank by the power of the knowledge from on high. He said also (may God be pleased with him), speaking of the age of Moses (upon whom be peace): "The exposition of his book amounts to forty loads and if God would give me leave to expound the true meaning of the *Fātiḥa* I would pursue my way therein until it reached the like of that, I mean forty heavy loads." Now this amplitude and extensive capacity and this opening of the gates of knowledge can only be inspired, Divine, heavenly.

Therefore, when God wishes well to one of His servants, He raises the veil between Himself and the Universal Soul, which is the Tablet [1] and the mysteries of certain created things are manifested in it and the spiritual meanings of those created things are engraved upon it and that Soul explains them as it wishes, to whom He wills among His servants.[2] For true wisdom is attained by knowledge from on high, and so long as a man does not attain to this rank he is not wise, for wisdom is one of the gifts of God Most High. "He giveth wisdom to whom He wills and he to whom wisdom is given, is given much good, but none bear it in mind save the wise of heart." [3] And that is because those who attain to the rank of inspired knowledge, having no need of much acquisition and the weariness of learning, study little and learn much, and their toil is light and their rest is long.

Know that when revelation was cut off and when the door

[1] Cf. pp. 196, 363 above.

[2] Cf. *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*, iii, p. 275. "All good things come from the grace of God and the irradiation of His light upon Universal Mind and from Universal Mind upon Universal Soul, and from Universal Soul upon the material forms which individual (human) souls see in the corporeal world."

[3] Sūra ii, 272.

of the apostolate was closed, men had no need of apostles and the manifestation of the summons (to a new faith), after the authentication of the proof and the perfecting of the faith, as God Most High said: "To-day have I perfected your religion."[1] And it is not the part of wisdom to manifest additional benefit without need. But the door of inspiration is not closed, and the help of Universal Soul is not cut off, because of the continual necessity of human souls and their need for strengthening and renewal and reminder. For men have no need (now) of the apostolate and the call, and they have need of reminder and admonition, because of their absorption in these temptations and their obstinate persistence in these lusts. For God Most High closed the door of revelation, whereby His servants were guided, and He opened the door of inspiration, out of His mercy, and ordered affairs aright and placed souls in their different ranks, so that they might know that God shows loving kindness to His servants and He gives sustenance to whom He will, without price.

CHAPTER VI

On the Ranks of the Souls in the Acquisition of Knowledge

Know that knowledge is implanted within all human souls and all of them are capable of receiving all types of knowledge, only a soul may miss its appointed share of that, because of something intervening or something occurring to it unexpectedly from outside. As the Prophet (God bless him) has said: "Men were created orthodox believers (حنفا) and myrmidons of Satan led them astray." The Prophet said also: "Every child is born in natural religion (على الفطرة), etc."[2] So the rational human soul is worthy to be enlightened by Universal Soul and is fitted to receive intelligible images

[1] Sūra v, 5.
[2] "Then his parents make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian."

from it, by the power of its original purity and its primal innocence,[1] but some souls have become diseased in this world and are prevented from apprehending the true meaning of things, by reason of various infirmities and different accidents. Some of them remain in their pristine health, without infirmity or corruption, and receive (i.e. from Universal Soul) as long as they remain alive. Now the souls which are perfect (صحيحة) are the prophetic souls, which are receptive of revelation and the (Divine) strengthening, and they are able to manifest miracles and supernatural power in this world of generation and corruption. For those souls continue in their pristine perfection and their constitutions have not been changed by the corrupting effect of infirmities and the defects of accidents. So the prophets became the physicians of souls,[2] and those who summoned mankind to the perfection of their created nature (i.e. to the true faith).

But as for the souls which are diseased in this lower world, they fall into different classes: some of them, through infirmity due to their abode (i.e. in this world) have received a weak impression (from Universal Soul), and the clouds of forgetfulness have affected their minds, and so they occupy themselves with study, and they seek to recover their original health, and their infirmities disappear by the application of the simplest of remedies, and the clouds of their forgetfulness are dispersed by a very little recollection. But some of them study throughout their lives and occupy themselves with learning and seek their first state of perfection, and their infirmity does not disappear by the use of the simplest remedies, nor do the clouds of their forgetfulness disperse by means of very little recollection. Then some of them study all their lives and occupy themselves in learning and trying to recover perfection,

[1] Cf. Plotinus, v, 3, 3.

[2] Cf. the teaching of al-Muḥāsibī, quoted in my *Early Mystic of Baghdad* p. 237: "God commanded them to bring relief to those who suffer (i.e, from sickness of the soul) and He said: 'O ye who are My witnesses, if any come to you sick, because he has fallen away from Me, heal him.'".

all their days, and do not understand anything, because of the corruption of their natural dispositions, for their disposition is corrupt and not receptive of the cure. And some of them remember and (then) forget, and they discipline and humiliate their souls and they find a little light and some feeble illumination. Now this distinction has appeared only because the souls were pre-occupied with this world, and their detachment from it is in proportion to their strength and their weakness, like the healthy person who has fallen sick and the sick person when he has become well. When this impediment is removed the souls acknowledge the existence of knowledge from on high and realize that they were wise in their original state and pure when they were first created, and their ignorance arose only through their association with this gross body and their continuance in this abode of trouble and place of darkness.

Now the souls do not seek, through study, to create knowledge which is non-existent, nor to bring into existence an intelligence which is lacking, but they seek for the restoration of the original, innate knowledge which has been lost, for infirmity has come upon them through their preoccupation with the adornment of the flesh and setting it upon a sure foundation and putting its basis in order. Now the loving father, when he undertakes the training of his child and occupies himself with its concerns, forgets all (other) affairs and is content with one affair, and that is the affair of the child. So also the soul, because of its passionate love and pity, has been concerned with this edifice (i.e. the body) and has busied itself in building it up and training it and in solicitude for its affairs. So the soul became submerged in the sea of human nature, because of its weakness and its individuality and, throughout its life, it had need of study, in order to seek for the recollection of what it had forgotten, being desirous of the recovery of what it had lost. For study is only the return of the soul to its own proper substance and the bringing forth to actuality of that which is contained (in potentiality) in its own

inner self, seeking thereby to perfect itself and to attain to its true happiness.

But when souls are so weak that they do not follow the right road to the realization of their true nature, they attach themselves, and have recourse, to a master who is compassionate and wise and ask for his succour, so that he may assist them in the search for what they desire and that for which they hope, like the sick person who is ignorant of what will cure him, but he knows that good health is praiseworthy and desirable, and he has recourse to a compassionate physician and exposes his state to him and takes shelter with him, so that he may heal him and make his sickness to cease from him. We have sometimes seen a learned man fall sick with a particular infirmity, affecting, for instance, the head and the breast, so that his soul shuns all knowledge and he forgets what he has learnt and it becomes confused to him, and all that he acquired in his past life and his days that are gone remains hidden within his memory and his recollection. Then, when he has recovered and health has returned to him, he ceases to be forgetful and the soul returns to what it had learnt and then it remembers what it had forgotten in the days of sickness. So we learnt that the knowledge had not disappeared, it was only forgotten, and there is a distinction between obliteration and forgetfulness. For obliteration is the disappearance of what is engraved and impressed, and forgetfulness is the obscuring of impressions, and it is like the mists or clouds which veil the light of the sun from the eyes of those who look, not like the sunset, which is the departure of the sun from (a position) above the earth to (one) below it.

So, then, the soul's preoccupation with study is the removal of the infirmity which has befallen it, from the substance of the soul, in order that it may return to what it knew in its original state and what it understood in its pristine purity. And when you have understood the cause and purpose of study and the real nature of the soul and its substance, then know that the soul which is sick needs to study and to spend

its life in acquiring knowledge. But as for the soul which realizes its sickness and whose infirmity is light and its evil trivial and its clouds thin, and its natural disposition sound, it has no need for excessive study and long toil. On the contrary, a very little consideration and reflection suffices for it, because it is restored thereby to its original state, and it returns to what it was at first and realizes itself and contemplates the mysteries within it and brings the potentiality which it possesses to actuality, and what was implanted within it becomes an adornment to it, and its affair is completed and its condition made perfect, and it comes to know many things in a very few days. Then it interprets what is known, in the right way, and becomes wise, perfect, articulate (متكلمة), and seeks light by approaching Universal Soul, which pours forth of its abundance, when it encounters the individual soul. And the latter becomes assimilated [1] to it by way of passionate love, in the beginning, and it cuts off the root of envy and the beginnings of contempt and turns aside from the vanities of this world and its pomp, and when it has reached this stage it has become wise and has attained to salvation and to victory. And this what all men desire.[2]

CHAPTER VII

On the Real Meaning of Knowledge from on High and the Means of Attaining It

Know that knowledge from on high is the irradiation of the light of inspiration, and inspiration comes after completion (تسوية), as God Most High said: "By a soul and Him Who fashioned it completely," [3] and completion is the making

[1] Cf. *Theology of Aristotle*, p. 85: "It becomes assimilated to Universal Soul and becomes like it in conduct and manner of life; there is no distinction between them or difference." And *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*, iii, p. 274.

[2] Cf. Plotinus, vi, 7, 22. "The soul taking that outflow from the Divine is stirred . . . it becomes Love . . . when there enters into it a glow from the Divine, it gathers strength, awakes, spreads its wings."

[3] Sūra xci, 7. Cf. *Maḍnūn al-Ṣayhīr*, p. 2.

sound of the soul and its return to its original disposition, and this return is accomplished by means of three things :—

(*a*) The study of all branches of knowledge and taking the greatest share of most of them.

(*b*) Genuine self-discipline and true meditation, for the Prophet (God bless him) alluded to this truth, saying : "To him who acts in accordance with what he knows, God grants knowledge of what he does not know." The Prophet also said : "To him who worshipped God in sincerity for forty mornings, God made springs of wisdom, arising from his heart, to be manifested by his tongue."

(*c*) Reflection, for when the soul has studied and is disciplined through knowledge and then has reflected on what was known to it, in accordance with what reflection requires, the door of the Invisible is opened to it, just as, to the merchant who disposes of his goods, in accordance with what disposal requires, the gates of profit are opened, and if he followed the wrong course, he would fall into the dangers of loss. So he who reflects, since he follows the right way, becomes one of those who understand, and a window into the Invisible World is opened in his heart, and he becomes wise, perfected, understanding, inspired, victorious. As the Prophet (God bless him) said : "To reflect for one hour is better than seventy years of devotion." [1] But we will enumerate the conditions of reflection in another treatise, since the exposition of Reflection, and how it comes about, and its true meaning, is an obscure matter requiring further elucidation, which will be facilitated, by the help of God Most High.

And now we will bring this treatise to an end, for in these words is enough for those to whom they are directed, and "he to whom God does not appoint light will have no light". God is the Lord of those who believe and in Him we should put our trust. May God bless our lord Muḥammad and his family and his companions, and give them peace. For God is our

[1] Cf. al-Muḥāsibī on Reflection. *An Early Mystic of Baghdad*, pp. 99 ff.

Sufficiency and how excellent a Protector is He, and there is no might nor power save in God the Exalted, the Almighty, and in Him is my confidence at all times. Praise be to God, the Lord of all created things.

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